

Next issue:  
Saturday, Sept. 20

# The Main Street **WIRE**

Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper

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Herb Berman, in his appearance Wednesday night before the RIRA Common Council.

## RIRA Common Council Hears from New RIOC President, Herb Berman

**Unresolved: Should Buses Have Been Diverted During Blackout?**

By Dick Lutz

RIOC President Herbert E. Berman spent an hour before the Common Council of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association Wednesday night covering a range of questions put to him by its members.

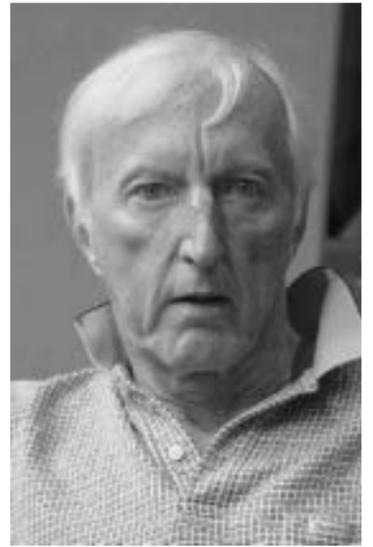
Much of the hour was spent on whether the Island's Red Buses should have been sent to fetch Islanders coming over the Queensboro Bridge during the Blackout August 14, but he had no answer: "Whether or not the buses should have been brought to pick up the people is an issue that has to be determined. There are pros and cons, and we have to look at that and we have to study it. Maybe, when all is said and done, it will be determined that it was the right thing to do and it can be done. My guess is that it probably should not have been done because of the possible consequences if, God forbid, there was a serious accident or something seriously wrong took place."

Berman strove to separate the question of whether buses should have been sent ("...an issue to be determined by necessary merit...") from what he characterized as the "untoward conduct" of resident

RIOC Board member Mark Ponton, who has admitted to using "direct language" with RIOC staffers in getting a shuttle going to and from the 59th Street Bridge. Ponton had engaged RIOC staffers Sari Dickson and Kenneth Leitner in a dialogue over whether the buses should be diverted. Once Leitner and Public Safety Deputy Chief Rene Bryan agreed, Ponton rode a bus to the Bridge (NYPD was not allowing travel into Manhattan) and picked up weary residents who had trekked from Manhattan locations to Queens on their way home.

The issue of Ponton's tactics had been raised by Councilmember Debra Mount Cornet, the author of a kiosk posting about the matter, saying, "Life is not a John Wayne movie." Cornet said she had heard "a number of residents" express "dismay over what happened that night with one of our resident Board members taking a bus."

Berman thanked her for raising the matter, saying, "That's an issue that remains unresolved. Our Board will have to consider the... what took place." Cornet had not used Ponton's name, but later Councilmember Jim Whelan did: "The name of the mystery man who was unnamed tonight is Mark



Mark Ponton, the resident RIOC Board member accused of "abusing" RIOC staffer Sari Dickson in demanding buses be sent to pick up residents during the Blackout.

Ponton. He was the one, the member of the Board, who insulted, screamed, and he shouted, threatened, a member of [the] RIOC [staff]. If I were there he would have been arrested... I've written to the Governor demanding that someone so unstable be removed from the Board of Directors." Sari Dickson remained unnamed, but witnesses have said that Ponton's conversations were held with her and Leitner.

*The WIRE* later asked Dickson if she felt abused by Ponton. "It's really an internal matter," she responded by phone. "I'm not going to comment on anything between a Board member and a staff member."

*The WIRE* also asked Ponton about Berman's comments, and he provided a statement: "While residents were forced to walk home, Red Buses were riding up and down Main Street empty. I spent about an hour trying to convince RIOC management to send the buses to Queens, just as they do

See **Berman**, page 3

### Briefly...

Islander **Tex Allen** and his sextet will appear tomorrow (Sunday, September 7) in a jazz concert at Chapel of the Good Shepherd. (See *Coming Up*, page 3.)

**Islanders will gather** Thursday night, 9/11, for a memorial observance in Good Shepherd Plaza at the memorial plaque. Bring candles for yourself and others.

**Assemblymember Pete Grannis** has applauded RIOC's acquisition of defibrillators, but has called for staff training and quick deployment of the units, concerned that, with the Island's emergency services coming over the bridge from Queens, officers of the Public Safety Department be in a position to use the devices to save lives.

The **RIOC Board meeting** scheduled for Thursday has been put off.

**Islander Karen Bdera** will participate in the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer September 20-21. She and other walkers will each raise \$1,750 or more that will go to fund access to care and the search for a cure. Karen would like to recruit contributors (she has 80 now, for a total of \$6,000 this year) and other walkers. She can be reached at **1-212-644-8944** or by e-mail: kbdera@goldman.com. Bdera has raised some \$46,000 in five Avon Walks. More information at [www.avonwalk.org](http://www.avonwalk.org).



A **Blackout timeline** is being prepared by *The WIRE* for future publication; contributions of what-happened-when are welcome: editor@MainStreetWIRE.com or 531 Main Street #413 / NYC10044.

### WIRE Seeking Reporters, Writers, Plus Distribution Volunteers; Meeting Set for 8:00 p.m. Monday

*The Main Street WIRE* will hold a meeting Monday night (September 8) to kick off an effort to recruit reporters and feature writers. The meeting is open to all, and will also focus on finding additional distribution help for to-the-door delivery to every Island apartment, in addition to finding back-up staff for the Friday-morning "stuffing" operation in which advertising flyers are inserted into copies of the newspaper.

*WIRE* writers are paid nominal free-lance fees for their work, though some have opted to write for the newspaper as a volunteer activity. Distribution volunteers give an hour or less each issue to make sure the paper reaches their neighbors.

For reporters and writers, there are openings for beat coverage of politics, housing, education, cultural affairs, and general reporting. Feature writers do *Islanders* profiles, stories on Island organizations, Island history, and other "soft-news" areas.

Monday night's meeting, starting at 8:00 p.m., will be held in the Westview Community Room at 625 Main Street. For additional information, call Managing Editor Dick Lutz at **1-212-826-9055**.

### News Nuggets From Berman

• **MetroCard for the Tram is not in prospect.** "I have no information that will give you any sense of comfort that it's about to happen... We are undertaking a course of meetings to try and see if that can happen and we'll keep you posted... If we're successful, we'll let you know and, if we're not successful, at some point we're going to ask you to join with us in attempting the appropriate pressure to try and get it to happen."

• **Public purpose funds are frozen.** "We put a temporary cessation on the expenditure of any of that money... We're reviewing our budgetary issues... It turns out there may be a shortfall this year."

• Berman is "delighted with the staff that I've inherited. I believe I have some extraordinarily talented and brilliant people." In particular, he named Sari Dickson, on loan from the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal, and Chief Financial Officer Patrick Siconolfi, who had preceded him, serving as Acting President.

• **Blackout post-mortems are being done** within the RIOC staff to determine "what was done right and what was done wrong." Berman said residents would be brought into that process after RIOC staffers and Public Safety Officers had been debriefed.

• Berman expressed **pride in the Island's handling of the Blackout.** "The mom-and-pop stores all co-operated. Our own RIOC staff did extraordinary work... We had our building managers in cooperation with our Public Safety Officers go-

ing up and down the buildings making sure that seniors stayed in their apartments for safety, making sure that if they were on any type of respirators or needed any type of medicine they received it, and they were not put in harm's way... I'm delighted that I've had an opportunity to come to a place where you have this level of cooperation."

• Berman said again that he plans an **open house** at the RIOC offices for sometime this fall, with others to follow "if that's successful."

• Berman said he will also communicate regularly with residents by accepting *The WIRE's* invitation to write a **RIOC President's Column** "as often as possible."



Herb Berman listened to a question from Residents Association First Vice President Steve Marcus Wednesday night, as Chief Financial Officer Pat Siconolfi stood in the background. Berman said Siconolfi will serve as his Vice President. Next to Marcus are RIRA President Matthew Katz and Secretary Sherie Helstien.

**7:00 Thursday night 9/11 – Memorial Observance, Good Shepherd Plaza**

# Letters

## To the Editor:

Is your walking transfer working?

Since mid-May, my attempts to use the walking transfer between the Lexington Avenue line at 59th Street and the F line at the 63rd/Lex station have not worked, despite assurances from token-booth clerks that such transfers work in both directions.

My requests for repair were received less than enthusiastically and less than competently – the answers I received applied to bus-to-subway transfers and other irrelevant items. A phone call produced a promise of a follow-up within two weeks but, over a month later, I was still holding my breath.

To tackle the matter at a higher level, I set up a conference call with Doug Sussman, the MTA's Director of Government and Community Relations (1-212-878-7469), and the head of MetroCard Customer Service, Paul Korzak (1-718-521-7064), and the matter was passed to a subordinate, Fred Benjamin, who is the Chief Officer of MetroCard Customer Service (1-718-243-4703). Action has been promised, but this time I'm not holding my breath.

Meanwhile, I'd like to gather more information from other residents having the walking-transfer problem. E-mail me at [helkatz@rcn.com](mailto:helkatz@rcn.com) or leave a phone message: call 1-212-935-7534, then press \*1 during the message. Please give me your phone number and a description of the problem you've had. Also let me know if you've attempted to deal with it by phone or mail, and what the results were.

I will follow up with the MTA.

**Sherie Helstien**

President Lawrence Reuter  
Transit Authority  
370 Jay St., 13th floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

## Dear Mr. Reuter:

I am writing you on behalf of the 21 people stuck in the elevator on the Roosevelt Island side of the subway on Wednesday, August 13, for 65 minutes from 8:20 a.m. to 9:25 a.m.

As you can imagine, with 21 people cooped up in this small box without any fresh air coming in, many people panicked and several people required emergency services when we exited the elevator. One woman has severe asthma and, if one of the elevator passengers did not have an inhaler, we would have had a serious medical emergency. As it is, she was sobbing and irrationally pushing against the doors in her hysteria.

During such circumstances, a terrible situation is made worse when you cannot get information about what is being done to help. When we contacted the female attendant at 8:20 a.m., she appeared irritable and gave the impression that we were disturbing her when we requested that she notify the proper authorities. She did not let us know whether she was able to get hold of the proper people, so we called back five minutes later. Again, she was nasty and she said, "Of course, I contacted someone," and she slammed down the telephone. We called five minutes later to ask if someone had arrived as yet. All we got was, "They are coming soon. Don't bother me again."

It was only 20 minutes later when a male voice answered our call that we were reassured. He said there were four engineers and five police officers. We kept up a steady dialogue with him, suggesting that he try to get us some air, call emergency firefighters, etc. He let us know minute by minute what was taking place – that the supervisor had arrived, the emergency services were available, etc. – and this relieved the anxiety greatly. However, it might have been even more helpful if someone on the emergency team were to suggest things we could do. There should also be some way to get fresh air into the cabin. The top outlet was locked, so we tried to open the inner door and were successful at times. This gave us fresh air. But why is there a vent if not for air? Why should there not be some method of providing air?

I can also tell you that 65 minutes is a loooong, long time!

The following is a letter from one of the "trapped" people who spent eight hours in the hospital to recuperate:

*Thank you for the note, fellow trapped neighbor... Yes, I will write a letter today to all the people who can make a difference and perhaps keep this from happening again. I did not get the list of our neighbors who were trapped like rats by the great and powerful MTA and their incompetent employees and illegal maintenance standards.*

*As for the comparison to the electric outage... Wednesday's activities and the subsequent eight hours in the hospital were quite enough for me... I could have done without the rest, but being without electric was not as terrifying as being trapped without air. —Kenneth Diebner*

**Doris Chernik, PhD**

## Letters Policy

**The WIRE welcomes** letters to the editor, to the community, and to/from officials. Publication on a *Name Withheld* basis will be considered, but the writer's name, address, and phone number **must** be provided for verification and for our records; anonymous letters are not considered for publication.

**Preferred methods of submission:** E-mail to [Letters@MainStreetWIRE.com](mailto:Letters@MainStreetWIRE.com) (E-mail format preferred, or use any word-processing software) to put a file on a PC-standard 3.5" floppy disk left at 531 Main Street addressed to *The WIRE*.

**Alternatives:** Typed, double-spaced copy left at 531 Main Street or faxed to 1-212-755-2540 (call ahead to 1-212-826-9055). Clearly-handwritten letters will be considered if brief, but we cannot take telephone dictation of letters.

**All letters are subject to acceptance, and to editing for length and clarity.** Recommend maximum length, 300 words; longer letters will be considered if their content merits the required space.

**Judith Berdy**

## To the Editor:

Today, September 6, 2003, marks the first anniversary of Governor Pataki's signing of Chapter 493 of the Laws of 2002, which for the first time requires RIOC's Board of Directors to have a majority of Island residents.

A year has passed and the Governor still has not fulfilled his commitment to appoint the two additional residents necessary to reach this majority. I have written on two occasions calling on him to move on these overdue appointments, but he has yet to acknowledge that he has any prospects under consideration. In light of some of the issues expected to come before the Board this fall affecting the Island community, this is particularly troubling.

Given that the Governor's appointments must be approved by the State Senate, which is reportedly planning to return to Albany for a limited session on September 16 with part of its agenda being to act on pending gubernatorial appointments, Island residents should forward their recommendations for these important positions to both Senator Olga Mendez and Governor Pataki as soon as possible and request an expedited review so that Island residents can assume control of RIOC's Board.

**Pete Grannis**  
Member of Assembly

## To the Editor:

*The WIRE's* use of the word "commandeered" in describing Mark Ponton's action in diverting a bus to pick up residents trudging home to Roosevelt Island on foot has an undeserved negative connotation, intended or not. He should be praised for his initiative, if anything.

But why did a RIOC Board member have to "commandeer" a bus? Was everybody at RIOC asleep? Or lost in the dark?

**Name Withheld**

## To the Editor:

By some miracle, all of the elderly, and disabled, came through the August 14-15 Blackout safely. I fit both of these categories and, while I have been through blackouts before, this one was really scary. Why?

I had some batteries for my transistor radio, and also a flashlight and some candles. What didn't I have? Matches.

I thought I would be able to use my kitchen range to heat some food, but no, the gas lights by an electric spark, which of course, needs electric power to work. No electricity, no spark. I could not light my candle either, and went from door to door on my floor in 2 River Road to beg for a match. I finally found one generous woman, who gave me a few books.

At about 8:30, my daughter called me from her home in Tennessee, but when she hung up, the phone no longer had a dial tone. I was 9 floors up, no way of getting help if I had a medical emergency, and no way of getting word to anybody. My emergency alarm system wasn't working either.

It seems to me, with all the announcements on the radio, that the elderly should be checked, someone should have climbed one flight at a time, and knocked at all ten doors, to see if the tenant was OK. Then the next floor could be checked. There are ten apartments to a floor here and, by the time all ten were checked, the staff member doing this would have his breath back, and climb to the next floor. Did this happen? No, it did not.

I am hoping, like everybody else in the affected area, that this never happens again, but there is no evidence that it won't. It wasn't supposed to happen this time. either. My point? You never know. Couldn't some plan be put in place, so that if something like this happens another time, the elderly and disabled are checked on?

Something should be done, because the elderly are frail, and need to know they can get help if they need it. I have never felt so alone and helpless.

**Dorothy Cusce**

**Letters deadline for Sept. 20 issue: Sept. 16**

After deadline, letters will be considered on a space-available basis.

## To the Editor:

Remember when Dr. Blue wanted to build the three-story apartments over the minischools and the community rallied against that? We did a great job of stopping him in his tracks.

My apartment overlooks the school at 575 Main Street, and I am on the third floor. Before I went on a trip, I saw they were fixing the school's roof and I thought that this was a good thing. However, when I returned two weeks later and saw these huge air-conditioning units with multiple fans



surrounding my apartment, I asked around, "How did this happen overnight, without any community review?" I spoke to Mr. [Scott] Weiss [of Amec] who is overseeing the construction job, and asked about the noise level that these monster units would be making, and he assured me that they were as quiet as kittens. However they are more like lions and tigers. I feel as though I am living in a wind tunnel, except without the breeze. It is bad enough we have the FDR Highway across the river, the last thing we need is more non-stop noise. I know I am powerless to stop these units,

which are a stone's throw away from my bedroom window. It would be too much to expect them to move the units down by the river away from view, but for those of us who sleep at night, and I think I'm not the only one, would it be too much to ask that they turn the units off at night? I mean, really, why do they need to run these things when the building is empty? No people exist there at night. But I do exist. And I know I am not the only one who feels this way.

Talk is cheap. I don't want to be placated. I want action. A simple timing mechanism and a little sound insulation would be downright neighborly.

**Neal Weissman**

## To the Editor:

As long as I have lived on Roosevelt Island (four years), my favorite way to spend a sunny afternoon has always been sitting on the lawn by the Lighthouse. Unfortunately, because of my own schedule and the rainy weather this summer, the last time before Labor Day weekend that I was able to enjoy this pastime was probably the end of July.

On Saturday, August 30, I could hardly have been more shocked and distressed to find that there was barely enough space to spread a towel for even one person to sit – where there was not dog dirt on the grass! I am not exaggerating; the place is no longer fit for children to play, nor for adults to relax. How could this beautiful space have been degraded to such an extent in so short a period of time?

I know that anywhere else in the city, pet owners who do not clean up after their dogs will be fined. And I thought that dogs are not even permitted to live on Roosevelt Island except under special circumstances. Whose oversight is responsible for this mess? And what can we do about it?

**Jane Foge**

## To the Editor:

I am writing to you concerning the Blackout and the elderly. My mother lives on the Island, alone, in 2 River Road. While she does have a home attendant, no one was with her when this occurred. She couldn't make a phone call, or warm food. If she had fallen she would not have been able to get help.

No one checked on her during the 24 hours the lights were out and, since then, she has spoken to other elderly people in the same situation and no one checked on them either.

My question is whether there is any plan implemented for emergency situations. What is being done for the elderly and/or disabled people there? If there is no plan for these people, how can one be implemented?

Unfortunately, I do not live close by and could not get to her. Being a sensible woman she took steps to keep cool but even this is an effort for her.

Is there no program in place to check on residents of 2 River Road in circumstances of this kind?

**Joanne Santoro**

## To the Editor:

Just a response to what I know must have been an oversight in your acknowledgements of merchants who came through for Roosevelt Islanders during the Blackout. The guys at the stationer's store were great and I think also deserve our thanks.

**Jennifer Dunning**

## To the Editor:

Most of the time, people honored in *The WIRE* are of the older generation. Very rarely do we take the time to recognize the honorable acts of someone younger. This is about my brother and the Blackout.

Having moved to the Island when he was three years old, Sean Boston spent most of his childhood and all of his teenage years on Roosevelt Island. He lived with his mother as well as his younger brother and sister in Eastwood. He embarked on a musical career at the age of 17 and got to travel to many places within Europe and Asia. At the age of 21, Sean moved to

See **Letters**, page 6

The summer season has departed, not with a bang but with a drizzle. Labor Day left much to be desired and we must hope for an Indian summer to make amends for the spate of bad weather we've endured. But, for all intents and purposes, autumn is upon us and that means there's activity in PS/IS 217, and your RIRA Common Council is back in action.

Not that RIRA was dormant this summer. Many of you attended the July screening of *West Side Story*, an event marred only by the weather. The August 28 showing of *Chicago* attracted twice the crowd, at least 600 people, and was perfection. RIRA's own Vicki Feinmel and Margie Smith were again the show's impresarios and were so frugal in their planning that the Public Purpose Funds, from which the event was financed, will be receiving a refund! It was a terrific end-of-summer event topped off with spectacular views of Mars, which is the closest to Earth it's been in 60,000 years. I brought binoculars and thought I could see Martians eating popcorn while watching our movie.

The RIRA leadership met informally in late August to "knock around" some ideas to bring to the Common Council in September. I thought this was a useful exercise and I hope the officers, vice presidents, and committee chairs that attended did, also. Great programs start with good ideas and the best ideas RIRA has acted on over the past 2½ years haven't come from me. Y'know, you can bring your ideas for a better Roosevelt Island to your building reps or RIRA committee chairs yourself. We all have a responsibility to help make life better here.

The first Common Council of the fall season hosted the new RIOC president, Herb Berman, who joined us during the Public Access portion of the meeting. Flanked by vice president and CFO, Pat Siconolfi, and their colleague, Sari Dickson, Mr. Berman fielded questions from the Council Members for almost an hour. The questions covered a gamut of issues, from the need for defibrillators and staff trained in their use, to the sorry state of repairs in Motorgate, to the prevalence of pigeon poop as a health hazard. The preponderance of questions, however, revolved around RIOC's handling of the blackout and the need for established procedures regarding the off-Island use of the red buses. Most of us know that the buses have long been used for shopping trips for the seniors and missions of mercy to Manhattan when Tram service is curtailed. The contingencies when off-Island use is not just sanctioned, but mandatory, need to be written down and shared with the residents.

I've been meeting with RIOC representatives on a variety of issues. The Chamber of Commerce, under President Julie Palermo, invited me to participate in its get-together at the RIOC offices last week. A year ago we started an initiative to attract off-Islanders here with signage at both Tram stations but nothing has been done so far to bring this about.

Editor's note: The President of RIOC has a standing invitation to provide a companion *RIOC Column* for publication here.

## Berman from page 1

whenever transit services are disrupted. As each minute went by I kept thinking of the number of people who were still walking who could have been riding. Finally, I just had had enough and told RIOC management that I wanted the buses to go where the people were now.

"A plan was finally approved by the RIOC General Counsel, the Deputy Chief of Public Safety, and the RIOC Bus Supervisor, after which I made a single trip to Queens, accompanied by the supervisor."

Ponton added, "I was not abusive to anyone, but admittedly, there came a point where I used language that was direct enough to convince RIOC that the residents expected and deserved this service. Since allegations have been made, I think we all deserve a public meeting to hear what really happened."

During Berman's Wednesday night appearance, Frank Farance, a longtime Councilmember from Island House, proposed that instead

# The RIRA Column



**Matthew Katz**  
Residents Association President  
e-mail: [matthewkatz@rcn.com](mailto:matthewkatz@rcn.com)

I persuaded RIOC to join the City's tourist and convention bureau, NYC & Company, a year ago last June, and they have just renewed that membership. RIRA used their Visitors' Center on Seventh Avenue to publicize the summer movies. Island artist Tony Vita presented mock-ups for both static signage and interactive video that just knocked my socks off. RIOC has commissioned and then passed on Tony's work in the past, and I hope they will recognize the quality of what has been offered.

President Berman has mentioned his commitment to making Roosevelt Island a destination for City-dwellers and tourists, and that effort must start with adequate signage followed by aggressive publicity, and I hope someone at RIOC will take the lead on this initiative.

The Roosevelt Island Safety Committee (RISK), of which RIRA is a member, also met with RIOC leadership to define and enhance Public Safety's role. This is the latest in a series of meetings called by this umbrella group to require Public Safety to meet standards set by the community. Unfortunately, the group convened too late in the week to report on in this column before press time. These are just two of the undertakings that are "works in progress," along with providing MetroCard service to the Tram, the establishment of written criteria for the distribution of public purpose funds, and better maintained street lighting. It's time these efforts culminated in positive results. President Berman needs time to learn the ropes, but that time must take into account the serious work already done and should be limited. Stay tuned.

Housing Management General Manager Doryne Isley has promised a return of the Westview pool and health facility within a month. You will recall that the facility was flooded by sewage during the Blackout, just one month after it had reopened following a two-year hiatus. This cleanup effort has afforded an opportunity to rectify some overlooked details while the

pool is empty, such as lane markers and ropes. Housing Management has not met with the Westview Pool Committee since May, and I hope we will have the chance to tour the facility and provide our input before much longer.

It was brought to my attention that, in my last column, I thanked many people and groups for their efforts during the Blackout, but neglected the Roosevelt Island Housing Management Corporation. That was an oversight and I apologize. Doryne and her staff knocked themselves out in many ways and for many hours and they deserve our thanks. In my first meeting with RIOC President Herb Berman, he committed his organization to developing contingency plans for the variety of emergencies that we, as part of New York City and as an island community, might have to face. Better use of generators and the red buses might have made the Blackout less stressful for many residents and for housing managers as well. I hope to participate in that effort and to ensure that the results are shared with you.

of looking at Ponton's conduct, Berman should consider "why RIOC had nothing in place [for resident transportation during the Blackout]." "What actually happened," Farance said, "is that there was no alternative transportation as had been done in the past - there were three hours and there was still nothing... but... a Board member, a resident of the Island, who does understand the nature of things, happened to express [a] point of view and get the right job done."

Berman hastened to make clear that he had thanked Cornet only for raising the behavior issue. "Somebody in the RIOC family was the recipient of... possibly the recipient... not 'possibly,' was the recipient of abusive conduct," he said.

As for the merits of the bus diversion, Berman said, "It's not a simple issue. You know, buses can easily have a disastrous accident that can result in enormous liability. I hate to be parochial; I hate to say there's a financial aspect but, by God, there is... So it's just not... With people just walking through the streets without lights and ev-

erything, the potential for a problem is there." Farance pointed out that it was not yet dark when the bus trips were started, but Berman held fast: "People walking without lights in daylight, the potential for a problem is there. There were serious issues. And these are issues that have to be resolved along with other issues."

"I have no doubt that in his mind [Ponton] was doing the right thing," Berman said. "I just believe, and I will always be very defensive of anybody who works for me, that publicly insulting... I don't think that's appropriate behavior... I can't accept that. I'm not saying that he didn't want to help people. But I don't think it warranted abusing anybody, and I'm defensive of my people. I just can't let that happen."

Berman was applauded as he ended the session in the lower-level room of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, after pledging an "open door" and a willingness to communicate with residents and others: "The worst that can happen is we disagree. You may be surprised - we may even agree."

# COMING UP



## — This Weekend —

**Jazz Concert: The Tex Allen Sextet, Sunday, Sept. 7, 5:00 p.m.,** Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Two guest artists.

## — The Coming Week —

**Postponed: RIOC Board Meeting,** no longer scheduled for **Thur., Sept. 11, 5:30 p.m.** Replacement date and time to be announced.

**9/11 Memorial Observance, Thursday, Sept. 11, 7:00 p.m.,** Good Shepherd Plaza at the memorial plaque, sponsored by the Residents Association, honoring those lost 9/11/01. Bring candles.

**Opening Reception, Gallery RIVAA, for *What Is Taboo?*, a mixed-media exhibition, Sat., Sept. 13, 6:00-9:00 p.m.,** Gallery RIVAA, exhibition on view through October 26, Wed. and Fri., 6:00-9:00; Sat.-Sun., 11:00-5:00. Free.



## — Future Events —

**The Main Street WIRE** - Next issue **Sat., Sept. 20.** (Get e-mail bulletins in the meantime; to subscribe, send an "Add Me" to [nyc10044@rcn.com](mailto:nyc10044@rcn.com).) **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Sept. 12; decision on fliers for *The Bag*, Mon., Sept. 15; fliers due Thur., Sept. 18. Future issues (normal twice-monthly schedule has resumed) - October 11, 25; November 8, 22 (Thanksgiving issue); December 13 (holiday issue), then twice a month January 10-June 12, 2004. **Phone/fax** for news, **1-212-826-9055/755-2540**; phone/fax for display and classified advertising placement and information, **1-212-751-8214/755-2540.** **To list your organization's Island event here,** e-mail information to [ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com](mailto:ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com), or leave it, addressed to *The WIRE*, at the desk at 531 Main Street; provide a telephone number for follow-up questions.

**Toastmasters Meeting, Mon., Sept. 22, 8:00 p.m.** For information, **1-212-935-1254** or **1-212-751-9577.**

**Roosevelt Island Committee of Community Board 8 meeting, Thur., Sept. 25, 7:30 p.m.,** Island House Community Room. Agenda to be announced.

**RIRA Common Council meeting, Wed., Oct. 1, 8:00 p.m.,** Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Open to the public; public comments invited near start of meeting.

# Senior Center

**Monday**  
10:30, **Blood Pressure Screen**  
12:30, **"Oldies" Movies**  
7:00, **Dance Class** (Beginners)

**Tuesday**  
10-11, **Latchhook Class**  
10-11, **Dance & Relax**  
1:00, **Bingo**  
6:30, **Yoga Class**  
7:30, **Games** (RISA)

**Wednesday**  
9:15, **Stay Well**  
10:30, **Beading Class**  
7:00, **Pokeno** (RISA)

**Thursday**  
10:00, **Tai Chi**

10:30, **Creative Arts**  
12:30, **Movie**

**Friday**  
9:30, **Yoga Stretch**  
7:00, **Games** (RISA)

**Saturday**  
7:30, **Bingo** (RISA)

## Special Events

**Tue., Sept. 16,** RISA General Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

**Wed., Sept. 17,** Atlantic City trip

**Fri., Sept. 26,** Birthday party

**Fri., Oct. 16,** Flu shots, 9:30-11:30

**Thur., Oct. 30,** Flu shots, 10-11

Home-delivered meals available: 1-212-744-5022, ext. 1203

# The WIRE™

Published by **The Main Street WIRE**  
©2003 Unisource2000™ Inc.  
531 Main St. #413, NYC10044

News **1-212-826-9055**  
Urgent news **1-917-617-0449**  
Advertising **1-212-751-8214**  
Circulation **1-212-935-7534**  
Fax **1-212-755-2540**

e-mail [MainStreetWIRE@rcn.com](mailto:MainStreetWIRE@rcn.com)  
in association with  
**Website NYC10044** [www.nyc10044.com](http://www.nyc10044.com)

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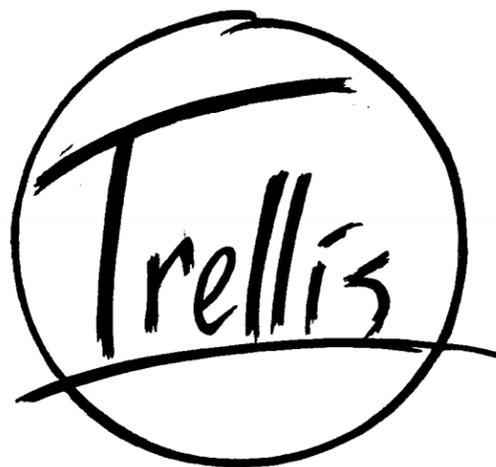
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### ISLAND KIDS



## Fall Semester

Classes Run

Monday, September 22

through Friday, December 19

- Music and Rhythm – Monday 9am
- Tumbling – Wednesday 9, 10, 11am
- New Baby Group – Friday 10:30am
- Art and Imagination – Tuesday 9, 10, 11am
- Creative Movement – Friday 9:30am

Classes will be filled on a first come, first served basis

536 Main Street Community Room  
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 and  
**PEPSI COLA**  
 (for their generous support)

Our evening, *Open Views: Films of the City*, was so successful.  
 We want to thank the RIOC staff, mechanical and grounds crew for working so well with us.

Over 1,000 off-Islanders visited our Southpoint Park for this fun summer night at the movies  
 See You Next Summer

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**Letters** from page 2

Brooklyn to start a family. Although not fully letting go of his musical aspirations, he worked as an executive limousine driver.

In 2000, Sean started working for the Roosevelt Island Youth Organization and became a friend to the community. No more was he the youth "hanging in the streets," but now he was the one trying to mentor other youths to do something more than just "hanging in the streets." Since then, he has been employed as an outreach worker for the Youth Program, mentoring youths, running groups, organizing and supervising sports events and various other activities.

In April of this year, Sean moved back to Roosevelt Island with his fiancé and 2 sons. Once again he has become a resident of Roosevelt Island. In addition to being a Youth Outreach Worker for the last three years, Sean has accepted a position as a lifeguard at the Westview Pool. Sean loves interacting with the residents on the Island, assisting them in any way that he can – as neighbors, friends, or as an employee.

On the night of the Blackout, Sean really showed what he was made of by showing a true sense of community. Although working for the Youth Program that evening and trying to keep all of the children from the Youth Center and PAL assembled in one place for their own safety, Sean assisted Public Safety in assembling and securing the safety of many senior citizens and disabled residents. Sean also took it upon himself to ensure the safe passage home of 24 off-Island teens and four counselors from the Brooklyn Police Athletic League by personally driving them back to Brooklyn.

Sean feels he finally knows what it truly means to be part of a community. Not only does he live here, but he tries to become involved in various community activities and has worked closely with community leaders. He stays involved in the community on a daily basis while also availing himself to the community in the face of crisis as seen the night of the Blackout! Thank-you, Sean.

**Lauren Ballard**

**To the Editor:**

We had another successful event down at SouthPoint Park last week – *Chicago* was shown on a huge inflatable screen with that amazing backdrop of New York City. It was spectacular.

Just as in July, there are many people to thank. Housing Management co-sponsored the event with RIRA and we could not have done it without their support. RIOC provided the people-movers and the person-power to set up and take down the screen; Trellis sold food; the Boy Scouts sold candy; and DJ Mike and the singer, Jada, were terrific.

But we want to give a special thank you to Virginia Granato, president of the Disabled Association. Virginia works so effectively, yet so quietly, that the night of the movie Margie missed giving her the thank you she so richly deserves. As part of the committee, Virginia agreed to try to make arrangements for a bus to transport anyone who needed help getting to the movie site. (Unfortunately the area is still a little too rough for some people to be able to traverse easily.) What we were hoping for was one trip from the Senior Center to SouthPoint and one return trip at the end of each movie. What we got was a series of continuous trips so that anyone who needed the bus could come and go pretty much whenever they chose to. That was well above and beyond what we asked for. We also want to thank the bus driver, especially for his expertise in maneuvering the bus at the July movie. The weather conditions were awful, yet he moved that bus with obvious skill and got everyone to and from the site safely and comfortably. We sincerely appreciate their efforts and thank them very much for their support.

And, thank you to all the residents and off-Islanders who came to the show!

**Margie Smith  
 Vicki Feinmel**  
 for RIRA Social, Cultural and Education Committee

**To the Editor:**

On Sunday, August 24, at 7:45 p.m., I was in the Garden Club working when three African-American boys, 8-10 years of age, were found in the garden. A gardener asked if they belonged to someone who was a member. They replied "no" and were asked to leave. They got upset at that and started to throw rocks at the woman.

I chased them, and two jumped over the fence. As the third boy started over the fence, I grabbed his tee-shirt and, as he wriggled over, I managed to pull his tee-shirt off. I asked for his name and where he lived. He pointed north, toward Coler hospital, and said his name was Sean Michael. Then they ran off.



Sadly, his shirt has Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech... at a commemoration in Austin, Texas, in 1999 (see photos of front and back of the shirt).

Is there a parent on the Island who wondered why his or her son came home without his shirt that evening? If they want to retrieve the shirt, they should contact Public Safety.

**Karen Lee**



# Classified

**50¢/word • 1-212-751-8214**  
 Deadline for September 20 issue: September 16

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